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RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS 7189
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ABUJA 001302

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ELAB](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [ENRG](#) [EAIR](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: NIGERIA: NATIONAL LABOR STRIKE -- SITREP #1

REF: A. ABUJA 1294
[B](#). ABUJA 1278
[C](#). ABUJA 1155

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[1](#). (SBU) SUMMARY. The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC) initiated a national labor strike at midnight on the morning on June 20. Oil companies report that essential personnel have reported for work and there is no impact as of yet on production. Airports closed in Abuja and Lagos by mid-day and fuel shortages have significantly reduced traffic. Public transportation is sparse to non-existent across the country and prices of personal and public transportation are reported to have increased as much as 400 percent. The situation remains calm and no violence has been reported anywhere as of mid-day June 20. While all is calm at present, the concern is that the strike will snowball into an outlet for pent-up frustration that has been building since prior to the elections. END SUMMARY.

[2](#). (SBU) NLC and TUC leaders confirmed acceptance of the June 19 GON offer to rescind the VAT increase, implement the public servant salary increase, and review the Port Harcourt and Kaduna refinery sales. The issue of the gas price increase remains unresolved. On June 19, the GON offered to reduce the price to 70 Naira per liter; however, labor remains steadfast in its demand that the price be returned to 65 Naira per liter, insisting that former President Obasanjo's unilateral price increase was unlawful (Ref. A). Although both NLC and TUC leadership have confirmed to Poloff that the review of the refinery sales is a satisfactory concession, popular opinion is that a "review" is just an empty promise.

¶3. (SBU) Oil companies Chevron and Agip report that there has been no impact on their operations (as of noon on June 20). Essential personnel have remained on post and are expected to consider joining the strike only if it goes on for several days. This information was confirmed by TUC leadership, who added that essential personnel in PENGASSAN and NUPENG would be called on to join in the strike if deemed necessary.

¶4. (SBU) Airports in Abuja and Lagos were open, though operating on a reduced staff, until approximately noon on June 20. As of noon, baggage handlers and staff of major domestic airlines left their posts and domestic air travel ceased. The British Airways flight to Abuja on June 20 arrived and departed again (per schedule) without incident. No other international flights are scheduled to arrive in Abuja on June 20. At Lagos airport, Lufthansa, Air France, Emirates, Qatar and North American report flights for June 20 are on schedule. Virgin Atlantic and Ethiopian Airlines have canceled their flights into Lagos for June 19 and 20.

¶5. (SBU) Fuel shortages remain a serious problem throughout the country and post has received reports from some areas that fuel stations are simply closed. Black market gas prices are reported as high as 430 Naira per liter. Embassy staff was told by gas and diesel distributors in Abuja that there is fuel available, but there is no way to deliver it. Diesel tankers in Lagos are delivering fuel, but at twice the normal price.

SITUATION AROUND THE COUNTRY

¶6. (SBU) ABUJA: No violence reported. Access roads into ABUJA 00001302 002.2 OF 003

Abuja from the airport, Kubwa and Karu (Abuja suburbs) are blocked by civilians; however, other routes into the city are open. A few roadblocks and burning tires within the city center were removed by police early in the day on June 20. There is a significant police presence on Abuja streets and there are police checkpoints reported on some access roads leading into the city. Public transportation is sparse and fares have increased dramatically. Government offices, schools and businesses are closed. Hospitals are confirmed open and accepting patients.

¶7. (SBU) LAGOS: No violence reported; however, there have been reports that groups of "area boys" are attempting to enforce the strike. Civilians have blocked some access road into/out of Lagos and there are reports that intercity buses are not being allowed to pass. Traffic is reported to be very light and security contacts report traffic volume is down 20 percent. Public transportation is sparse and fares have increased as much as 400 percent.

¶8. (SBU) MAKURDI (Benue State): No violence reported. Civilians have blocked roads and are enforcing a stay-at-home order. Markets are closed and contacts report little or no vehicular movement. The situation in Gboko is reported as "tense;" however, no violence has occurred there either.

¶9. (SBU) JOS (Plateau State): No violence reported. Schools and markets were reported open in the city center on the morning of June 20; however, contacts indicate they closed early in the afternoon. Vehicles are reportedly moving unhindered.

¶10. (SBU) KADUNA (Kaduna State): No violence reported. Most businesses are reported closed and traffic is light. Contacts reported Kaduna is "much quieter than normal."

¶11. (SBU) KANO (Kano State): No violence reported. Government offices and businesses were reported open in the

morning, but closed about noon. Gas stations are reported closed and the black market rate for gas is 430 Naira per liter.

¶12. (SBU) SOKOTO (Sokoto State): No violence reported. Contacts reported some businesses remain open; however, labor leaders are visiting open businesses and asking them to close. Black market gas prices are reported at 800 Naira per liter. Little to no traffic is present on the streets.

¶13. (SBU) DUTSE (Jigawa State): No violence reported. Contacts report no evidence of the strike. Government offices and businesses are operating normally.

¶14. (SBU) BAUCHI (Bauchi State): No violence reported. Government offices, businesses, schools and hospitals are closed. Contacts report only the Red Cross is providing emergency medical care. There is no public transportation and traffic is reportedly light. Civilians have closed some roads.

¶15. (SBU) MAIDUGARI (Borno State): No violence reported. Government offices, businesses, schools and hospitals are closed. A few local markets are open. The state government has called for no movement. Roads are open but traffic is reportedly almost non-existent. Black market gas prices are reported at 650 Naira per liter.

COMMENT: THE SNOWBALL EFFECT

¶16. (SBU) COMMENT. All is quiet at the moment and that is a good sign. However, there is significant concern the strike could "snowball" and become an outlet for pent-up frustration

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from this spring's elections and prior. There is certainly plenty of pent-up anger and frustration that is looking for an outlet. The challenge for the labor movement is in keeping the focus on the gas price. Both the opposition ANPP and the AC have endorsed the general strike. END COMMENT.

MISSION RESPONSE

¶17. (SBU) Mission Nigeria has limited travel outside Abuja and Lagos and curtailed discretionary air travel. A warden notice will be issued to the Amcit population advising of the situation.

This is a joint message from Embassy Abuja and ConGen Lagos.
CAMPBELL